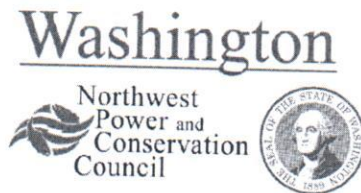


Dr. Tom Karier
Council Member
N. 501 Riverpoint Blvd, Suite 425
Spokane, WA 99202



Phil Rockefeller
Council Member
924 Capitol Way S, Suite 105
Olympia, WA 98501

November 21st, 2012

Ms. Lori Preuss
Rules Coordinator
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA, 98501

Dear Ms. Preuss,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule change to the size and bag limits for bass, walleye and channel catfish in the Columbia River Basin. Option 1 of Proposed Rule Change Number 9 will remove all size and bag limits for bass, walleye and channel catfish in the Columbia River, Snake River and tributaries and thus will improve protection of native and ESA-listed species, including juvenile salmon and steelhead. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council has an obligation in federal law to protect and enhance fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin. As Council members representing Washington State on the Council, we strongly support Option 1 because of the additional protection it will afford fish that are the focus of many projects in our Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program..

On August 9, 2012, the Council convened a science-policy workshop on predation in the Columbia River Basin. The workshop brought together more than 75 fishery managers, scientists and policy makers to discuss predation on native fish in the Columbia Basin. It was noted at the workshop that predation is one of the major forces that can change the demographics of prey populations and the structure of fish communities. Various examples were provided that showed predation can have both direct and indirect effects on the food web, and as you know, cascading trophic effects are particularly important in fish communities. One of the main summary points from the workshop was that better coordination and consistent management are needed across the basin to address predation by non-native fish including smallmouth bass, walleye and channel catfish, on native fish species of concern, such as salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and lamprey.

With this regional effort in mind we are encouraged to see Washington considering this proposed rule change that will protect native and endangered species and support regional conservation and restoration efforts. We support Option 1 and encourage the agency to work with Oregon to apply the same policy to co-managed areas in the lower Columbia River.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Rockefeller".

Council Member Phil Rockefeller
Washington State
Northwest Power and Conservation Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Karier".

Council Member Tom Karier
Washington State
Northwest Power and Conservation Council